

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

DLOS-03 OFA-01 /062 W

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R 231650Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5294

INFO CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IC

SUBJECT: PROGRESSIVE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

1. PROGRESSIVE PARTY'S ANNUAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

APRIL 18-20 PRODUCED NO SIGN OF DISCONTENT OVER PP'S COALITION PARTNERSHIP WITH INDEPENDENCE PARTY IN SPITE OF LINGERING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND RECENT SHARP CRITICISM IN IP PRESS OF FONMIN AGUSTSSON'S VISIT TO USSR. INCUMBENT PARTY LEADERS WERE REELECTED HANDILY IN WHAT CAN BE VIEWED AS IMPLICIT VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN COALITION AS WELL AS IN THEM PERSONALLY. SUBSTANTIVE DELIBERATIONS WERE LIMITED LARGELY TO DOMESTIC ECONOMIC MATTERS, WITH BARELY A MENTION MADE OF FOREIGN POLICY.

2. MEETING OF ABOUT 115 DELEGATES WAS PORTRAYED TO US

BY PP SOURCE AS SOMETHING OF PEP RALLY AIMED AT EX-POUNDING DIMENSIONS AND SERIOUSNESS OF ECONOMIC SITUATION WHILE GENERATING CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT AND PARTY PLANS

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FOR DEALING WITH IT. DECLARATION ISSUED AT MEETING'S

END APPLAUDED ECONOMIC MEASURES OF GOVERNMENT THUS FAR AND OUTLINED IN GENERAL TERMS WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE. PRIMARILY BECAUSE MEETING FOLLOWED CLOSELY ON HEELS OF NATIONAL PP CONVENTION LAST NOVEMBER THERE WAS LITTLE SENTIMENT IN FAVOR OF AIRING POTENTIALLY CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE OF DEFENSE RELATIONS WITH US AND NATO. ATTEMPT BY SOME YOUNG LEFTISTS TO DO SO DIED IN COMMITTEE, AND CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE SAID ONLY THAT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MEETING REFERRED TO DECISIONS OF 1974 PARTY CONVENTION (WHICH INCLUDED STATEMENT OF PP GOAL THAT THERE BE NO FOREIGN FORCES IN ICELAND IN PEACETIME AND CALLED LAST YEAR'S DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT WORKED OUT WITH US STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION). CONCLUDING DECLARATION ALSO CONTAINED RITUAL ACCOUNT OF LAST SUMMER'S GOVERNMENT FORMATION EFFORTS THAT LEAD TO LAST-RESORT COALITION BETWEEN PP AND IP, BUT THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT AFTER EIGHT MONTHS THIS ADMITTED MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE IS CAUSE OF SERIOUS STRAIN WITHIN PP.

3. ALL INCUMBENT PARTY LEADERS WON EASY REELECTION: CHAIRMAN OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN, VICE CHAIRMAN EINAR AGUSTSSON (BOTH OF WHOM RECEIVED NEAR-UNANIMOUS VOTE), SECRETARY STEINGRIMUR HERMANSSON, TREASURER TOMAS ARNASON, AND VICE TREASURER HALLDOR E. SIGURDSSON. ONLY NEW COMER TO TOP RANKS IS RAGNHEIDUR SVEINSBJORNDOTTIR WHO REPLACED DECEASED ALTERNATE PARTY SECRETARY IN CLOSE UPSET VICTORY DESPITE LEADERSHIP BACKING OF HER OPPONENT. PARTY'S YOUTH FACTION, DEPLETED BY LAST YEAR'S LEFTIST DEFECTIONS, SUCCESSFULLY CONTESTED TWO VACANT POSITIONS IN HEIRARCHY, ELECTING NATIONAL YOUNG PP CHAIRMAN EGGERT JOHANNESSEN TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SEAT AND 27-YEAR-OLD MP HALLDOR ASGRIMSSON AS ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER YOUTH WING, HOWEVER, AVOIDED ANY CHALLENGE TO INCUMBENTS.

4. MEETING HEARD REPORT ON LOS FROM PP DELEGATE TO CONFERENCE IN GENEVA THORARINN THORARINSSON AND EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR ICELAND'S PLANS TO DECLARE 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONE THIS YEAR.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PARTY MEETINGS, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975REYKJA00450
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750143-0337
From: REYKJAVIK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750424/aaaaawoy.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <12 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROGRESSIVE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING
TAGS: PINT, IC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006